

# Arrange Funerals for Victims of Explosion at Nixon's

## CITY FIREMEN GIVE DETAILS ON THE JOB OF BIG BLAST

**Praised for Work at Explosion Mayor Wilson Aids in Rescue Work**

Under the direction of Chief Francis of the New Brunswick fire department, the first department at the scene the fire fighters of the local companies worked after Chief Campbell, the Garfield and East companies and members of other companies reported for service at Bonhamtown on Saturday.

There was needed more than anything else and the fire companies of the other companies in attendance. The local firemen did efficient work and remained long after many of the other companies left the scene. The Amboy men went down the remains throughout the time the report was going the rounds that another big explosion was expected. Mayor Wilson and Chief Campbell also worked hard in the battle to extinguish the fire.

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Local residents employed at plants in the vicinity of where the trouble occurred, assisted in carrying out bodies of the dead and injured.

Doctors, nurses and ambulance drivers of this city also worked hard around the neighborhood of where the great explosion occurred. Lieutenant Jensen sent the police ambulance and also notified the City Hospital, American Smelting and Refining and Raritan Copper companies to send out their ambulances.

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**Ammonite Co. Report**  
NEW BRUNSWICK, March 3.—R. Norris Shreve, president of the Ammonite Company, at Nixon, who resides in East Orange, issued this morning the list of dead, injured and missing, employed by that company. The dead: Edward L. Smith, Metuchen, superintendent of the plant; Lester Spencer, foreman; Mrs. Robert Wherry, whose residence was given as Scotch Plains, but who is known to be living at Metuchen; Harold Shide, of Metuchen, and Hugo Higgins, of Lindenau. The company's injured men are: Fitzhugh Catlett, John Peretti, Paul Ostrovich, Fred Delbosco and Thomas Kelly. The missing: Arthur Cole, Metuchen, and Richard E. Crofton, Highland Park.

**Funeral for Mrs. Wherry**  
METUCHEN, March 3.—The funeral of Mrs. R. J. Wherry, Jr., who met her death during the Nixon explosion Saturday will be held tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock from the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Wherry, Sr., at Scotch Plains. Young Mrs. Wherry was married about two years ago and came to Metuchen. She was employed as stenographer in the Ammonite company's plant.

**Chemists to Examine Ruins**  
Chemical experts were requested yesterday by Assistant Prosecutor John E. Toolan to make an examination of the scene as soon as the wreckage could be off.

**Retires From Business**  
L. Lobel, who for the past eighteen years has conducted a furniture, musical and toy shop, at 358 State street, has retired from business, and is to be succeeded by the same business in the line of toys, baby carriages, picture frames, gift furniture and musical instruments.

**Gaiety and Color**  
Parasols and scarfs of gaily patterned cretonne are worn with simple straightline cotton frocks at Palm Beach.

**America's cotton crop** before the appearance of the boll weevil was \$40,000,000 and between \$600,000 and \$700,000 is spent each week in admissions to them.

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**This Section Greatly Alarmed During Tense Moments After Explosion**

Now that forty-eight hours have passed since the terrible explosion at the plant of the Ammonite Company at Nixon, adjoining Raritan Arsenal, and no further detonations have taken place, residents in Metuchen, New Brunswick, Perth Amboy and other places in the immediate vicinity are commencing to breathe freely again. Reports that large quantities of explosives were stored near the demolished plant and that the smouldering fire placed them in danger, resulted in the same fear being shown by residents in this locality as was experienced by them during the Morgan explosion of 1918.

The latest figures show eighteen killed, two missing and sixteen persons in New Brunswick hospitals as a result of the explosion shortly before 11:30 Saturday morning. The exact cause of the detonation probably will never be known as those who might be able to tell what happened had their lives snuffed out when the calamity occurred.

The explosion was heard and felt by thousands in this part of the state and the funnel shaped cloud of smoke was seen by many who rushed to windows or out of doors immediately following the blast. The people in this vicinity realized a terrible explosion had taken place, but they did not realize the great loss of life connected with the calamity and when first reports of the known dead were received Saturday afternoon the shock of the news stunned the populace. Relatives and friends of those working in the plant strove desperately to secure some definite information as to the fate of their loved ones or acquaintances. Soon after the blast all roads leading to the plant were blocked with automobiles going to the scene of the explosion.

Fire companies, ambulances, doctors and others called in the emergency were given the right of way and efforts were made to keep on-lookers away from the plant. The devastated premises drew 20,000 sightseers yesterday who expected to see firemen and other workers extricate the bodies of more missing victims from the ruins. There was no digging for bodies, as the heat of the debris and the peril of further explosions forbade extended work.

Even at the demolished one-story frame dwelling of Arthur Dumas and his family it was difficult, because of the heat of the debris, to extricate the remains of the four who were crushed and burned in the house. Dumas escaped with minor injuries. His wife and their three children were killed. Mrs. Dumas's torso was found in the cellar. Bones of the three children were found, charred, at the threshold of the door, after they had been blown by the blast.

Charles Lipkey and Robert Jones, employees of the Nixon Nitration Company, appeared at the property yesterday, their disheveled report that they were among the missing. They said they were not at the plant Saturday. Arthur Coles and Richard E. Crofton are known to be missing. Both worked for the Ammonite Company. Crofton was a chauffeur. In the yard yesterday a fireman found Crofton's license and clinging to it a shred of overalls. At their homes it was said they had not returned since leaving for work Saturday morning.

**Fear Others are Dead**  
Though these were the only two listed as known to be missing, the authorities are fearful that others buried in the debris of the Nixon Nitration Company's office building, Superintendent William L. Saunders, Nixon superintendent, said yesterday that he would be unable to give a number of days, and possibly for a number of days, to the names of the missing employees of the company, if any are found to be unaccounted for. He explained that the company's records had been destroyed in the explosion and that these records would have shown names of the men working at the plant Saturday. Saunders found a box yesterday containing ashes. The box was at a spot near the ruined office building. The ashes, he said, were the remains of \$160 in bills that had been on the paymaster's desk.

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## Ambulances Cared for the Injured



Ambulances from Perth Amboy and New Brunswick, were rushed to the wrecked plant of the Nixon Nitration Plant following the heavy explosion which took a toll of many lives. Photo shows one of them about to leave with the last of the injured. About 150 men and women were at work in the plant at the time, all of them lined up for the Saturday payroll.

ferred from that offer. On Saturday by Mr. Nixon, who ventured the guess that a quantity of TNT had been overlooked in the separation process at the arsenal and that this explosive, transferred to the Ammonite Company, had caused the blast.

Major Casad said the ammonium nitrate was separated from the TNT at the arsenal under supervision of army inspectors. These ingredients were taken from shells turned over to the arsenal by the government after the war. The separation work was done at the arsenal by the Columbia Salvage Company. Major Casad said that the army inspectors checked not only as to the quantity of ammonium nitrate derived in this process by the Columbia Salvage Company, but that they made certain, in addition, that no TNT remained before the ammonium nitrate was placed in tanks for transportation to the Ammonite Company's factory, there to be transformed into fertilizer.

**Admits TNT Possibility**  
The commandant admitted that it was possible that a quantity of TNT might have been overlooked even under this careful supervision, but he said he was positive that such a quantity would have been insufficient to cause an explosion of the devastating measure of the blast on Saturday.

Major Casad pointed out that in the Ammonite Company factory were large quantities of ammonium nitrate under process of crystallization at the time of the disaster, besides a large quantity stored in the building awaiting this process. He said the plant contained much oxygen and carbon. He said it was his belief that too much of these elements in themselves non-explosive, had been held in the plant and he likened their possible explosion to the explosion of dust.

He added that the government experts took the greatest care in supervising the extraction of the TNT from the condemned shells. The ammonium nitrate then was put in liquid form, in tanks on freight cars and sent to the Ammonite Company building half a mile away. It was there put in four large tanks outside the building and piped into cauldrons in the factory. The filtered liquid was poured off and the residue was evaporated into a powder for fertilizer.

## DUMAS FAMILY FUNERAL HERE

**INVESTIGATIONS START OF NIXON EXPLOSION**

(Continued from page 1.)  
the possibility of further explosions for the extended work. Mounds of explosives and pools of inflammable acids menaced the men who dared to comb the ruins. Pungent yellow gas sharp-tongued flames were disturbed. Intense heat from warped beams and tumbled tiles made the work still more difficult.

Through the night firemen stood by while lights were played on the blazing heap. Physicians, nurses and ambulances stood in readiness. Until the ruins cooled down, which might take a number of days, no thorough search for other victims will be made. Those in charge of the work fear that within the debris there would be a spot near the ruins of the explosion which will explode in contact with water or by impact.

Hundreds of policemen, state troopers and special officers were required yesterday for traffic duty on roads leading to the plant. Automobiles from New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland were included among the 5,000 that drove four abreast along the roads. All cars were stopped a quarter mile from town.

## ASKS \$30,000 DAMAGES IN CROSSING ACCIDENT

Miss Margaret Sheehan of Oak street, has brought suit, through her attorney, David T. Williams, in the supreme court, for \$30,000 damages as a result of injuries she received on the night of October 1, 1923, when struck by a gate at the Smith street crossing of the Central Railroad. The automobile names were defendants, one the Central Railroad and the other James Doukas, the owner of a bus line. The railroad is sued for \$15,000 damages and Doukas for \$15,000.

Besides her parents and husband the sidewalk near the gate where the bus came along. The bus started to cross the track and it is alleged that the gates were lowered in front of it. The gates, in order to clear the track, crashed through the gate and the gate from the force of the impact crushed the automobile and struck Miss Sheehan, inflicting painful injuries from which she has not yet recovered.

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## Rescue Parties Formed Quickly



Aid came quickly to the many injured in the explosion of the Nixon Nitration Works plant at Nixon. Photo shows one of the rescue parties caring for injured. It also shows close-up of the tangled mass of wreckage. It is believed the number of dead many reach two-score.

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## Fitzgerald Lost Life Trying to Save Others

One of the local dead as a result of the Nixon explosion, John E. Fitzgerald, forty-eight years old, of 397 Laurie street, risked his own life in an effort to save a fellow worker.

Mr. Fitzgerald was the oldest employee of the Nixon company at the Bonhamtown plant, having served for a period of about nine years. He had a building of his own and some time ago called in an employee who was working out in the cold. The employee whose life he endeavored to save on Saturday.

The Laurie street resident is survived by his wife, Mrs. Emma Fitzgerald, two daughters, Madeline and Frances, a son, Robert, and four sisters. Mrs. James McLeod, Mrs. Bertha Brownmiller and Mrs. Thomas Martin, of this city, and Mrs. Jacob Taylor, of Camden. The funeral is to be held tomorrow morning.

## MOURN DEATH OF L. SPENCER

**Funeral for Well Known Man Will Be Held at Metuchen on Wednesday**

The funeral for Lester Spencer, one of the victims of the explosion at the Nixon Nitration Plant on Saturday and son of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Spencer, will be held from the home of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Robert Ten Eyck, 19 Durham avenue, Metuchen, on Wednesday afternoon at 2 o'clock, the Rev. J. G. Mason, of Metuchen officiating. Interment will be in Alpine cemetery. The Masonic funeral service will take place at the grave.

Besides his parents, Mr. Spencer is survived by his wife who was formerly Miss Elsie Ten Eyck of Metuchen.

Mr. Spencer was well known in Perth Amboy and obtained considerable note as a baseball pitcher on the high school team. He graduated from the local institution in 1914.

Mr. Spencer was employed at the plant as assistant superintendent. As Edward Smith, the superintendent, and the bodies of the stenographer and Mr. Spencer were all found in the same place, indications are that they were in the office of the plant when the explosion took place. Besides other injuries Mr. Spencer suffered a fracture of the skull and a more broken bone. Mr. Smith was alive when aid reached the plant, but died a few hours after being admitted to the hospital. Close friends of the Spencer family said it is believed some TNT found its way accidentally into the plant and was not discovered.

Mr. Spencer was twenty-nine years old and the only child.

## SOUTH AMBOY ACTS AGAINST EXPLOSIVES

**SOUTH AMBOY, March 3.—**The explosion at the Nixon Nitration plant on Saturday, besides claiming among its victims, Mrs. Richard Wherry, of Morgan, well known in this city, did considerable damage about South Amboy.

Reports yesterday say that approximately one hundred homes suffered however slightly from the concussion forces in the Mechanicsville section the front window of the barber shop of Joseph Jerome was blown in. A window in the Mechanicsville Hose company headquarters was also pushed out by the impact. The ceiling and walls of several homes were wrecked.

As is generally the custom, especially since the far famed historic explosion at Morgan—many people of nervous temperament were seen on the streets about to leave the city, fearing a recurrence of the explosion.

Rumors to the effect that black powder is brought to this city daily and is being loaded and unloaded for shipment to other points was broadly stated about the city yesterday. From what could be learned, it is understood that at a spot not far distant from the place where the recent flare-up took place this very high explosive is being shipped.

In the face of the several catastrophes that took human lives as toll

the people of the city seem to feel that the bringing of explosives to South Amboy is far from a wholesome idea. An ordinance recently introduced into the council pertaining to the handling of explosives within the city limits has been laid over for some reason by the council members.

It is understood that in other municipalities the handling of explosives is strictly forbidden. If it is within the power of the council to stop this dangerous practice, the people are inclined to feel that something wants to be done and done quickly.

Both Mayor Chase and the members of the council have within the past twenty-four hours come in for some sharp criticism. Since the explosion at Nixon and the rumors of the powder is being unloaded here people are in a nervous state, and it seems that any demands that they might make of the council in the way of demanding them to at once take steps to stop this dangerous explosive practice would be letting them or easy.

The council will meet tomorrow night. It is very likely that the matter will be brought before them, and that they will be forced to take drastic steps along the elimination lines.

## MATAWAN MAN TELLS OF BLAST AT METUCHEN

**Corbett Escaped Due to Half Holiday—The Cause Is Not Known**

MATAWAN, March 3.—D. E. Corbett, of Valley Drive, Matawan Township, who is connected with the Nixon Nitration Company, is alive today because of the fact the office force of the company did not report for work on Saturday. The office in which Mr. Corbett was employed, with eight others, received the full force of the explosion, and the roof and front wall were blown in such a manner that anyone in the building would have been almost instantly killed or else badly injured. Two office employees had reported, Mr. Corbett said, but they were in other sections of the plant at the time and for this reason escaped injury.

According to Mr. Corbett the cause of the blast Saturday morning that shook the countryside and killed between twenty and thirty employees was the cause of the rebuilding of the plant, which are used by the Nixon company, were considerably smashed. Mr. Corbett said the machinery had not been damaged and that the cause of the explosion was the cause of the rebuilding of the plant. A Perth Amboy man by the name of Rasmussen has been employed to clear up the remains of the explosion so the rebuilding work may go on.

It is believed that the only man who could have given some idea of the cause of the explosion was Mr. Smith, superintendent of the Ammonite Company plant. Smith died in a hospital some hours after the explosion without making a statement.

Fire companies from various sections of Monmouth county answered the call for aid in extinguishing the flames that followed the explosion. The request for help was made by apparatus came from the command at Camp Raritan, which adjoins the Nixon plant.

Many people from Matawan and other sections of Monmouth and Ocean counties visited Bonhamtown Sunday to view the remains of the plant. General surprise was expressed that greater damage had not

**Great Traffic Jam in Borough of People on Way to Explosion Scene**

METUCHEN, March 3.—The tragic explosion at Nixon shortly before noon Saturday has brought much grief in the borough. Several of the citizens died while many others were injured. Many families were set into commotion Saturday when they heard the blast and found that the Nixon works, where their husbands and fathers were working, was the scene of the explosion. They hurried to the plant to get word of the safety of their people.

Yesterday the police made an effort to handle the largest volume of automobile traffic on its way to the Nixon scene. The police estimated that along Middlesex avenue nearly 2,000 cars on hour passed.

Funeral arrangements are being made today for those who died. The funeral of Lester Spencer, of Durham avenue, will be held Wednesday afternoon at 2:30. The Masonic and Elks organization will hold special services for him. Interment will take place in the Alpine cemetery, Perth Amboy.

The Masons are also preparing for the funeral of Harold Slade, a member of the George Washington lodge, No. 238, F. & A. M. of New York. Mr. Slade was superintendent of the Ammonite plant.

The funeral of Harold Slade will take place tomorrow afternoon. Rev. Calvin Hare, of the Baptist church, will conduct the services, followed by interment in the Hillside cemetery. Mr. Slade lived at Menlo Park and was an employee of the Ammonite plant.

been done to residences located within a mile or two of the plant. Although the blast shook Matawan and vicinity, no windows were broken or other damage reported. The cloud of white smoke following the explosion could plainly be seen over the hills to the west of the borough and called to mind the Morgan experience of 1918.

## CHURCH INSTALLATION

The installation of the recently elected elders and deacons of St. Paul's Episcopal church took place yesterday at the morning service. Rev. Dr. Jacob Gans was in charge. The elders are Michael Goodwin, Robert Gilling and Henry Detering and the deacons are Paul J. Angus and Vincent Goodwin and August Williams. The officers are organized as: Dr. Gans, president; Paul J. Angus, financial secretary; and Michael Goodwin, treasurer.

## HERE'S WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT TANLAC

"If it had not been for Tanlac I would still be a sick, discouraged woman, for nothing else seemed to do me any good," says Mrs. Edward Gibbs.

All the advertising in the world and all the sales efforts combined could not have made the great success for TANLAC that has been attained, unless this reconstructive tonic possessed merit of the greatest degree. Over 40 Million Bottles of Tanlac have been sold and the demand today is greater than ever before.

That TANLAC possesses merit and has brought relief to hundreds of thousands of persons is attested by the great number of testimonials that have been received by the company from people in every state of the Union and every province of Canada. There are over 100,000 such statements on file with the company, all ringing with sincere praise for TANLAC and what it has accomplished.

Here are excerpts from a few of the 100,000 statements on file:

Mrs. Edward Gibbs, Lancaster, Pa.—"For 2 years indigestion deprived me of nearly all the pleasure of living. If it had not been for TANLAC I would still be a sick and discouraged woman, for nothing else seemed to do me any good."

Mrs. Mary A. Benson, Seattle, Wash.—"Following an operation my stomach and nerves seemed to give way and I became almost helpless. As a last resort I tried TANLAC. I began to improve from the very first day."

gained 29 lbs. and today am feeling fine."

O. E. Moore, Kansas City, Mo.: "My stomach seemed to pain me constantly. I would blast up with gas, lost my strength, and could not sleep or rest. I was on the down-grade all the time. Tanlac corrected my troubles and put me in excellent shape."

Thomas Lucas, Petersburg, Ontario: "Well, sir, buying TANLAC was the best investment I ever made, for it built up my health and strength to where I haven't a complaint in the world."

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Kanke, Detroit, Mich.: "For more than a year our three children, a son and a daughter, were suffering from indigestion. Their stomachs were upset, appetites poor, the color had left their cheeks, their nights were restless and during the day they would just mope around taking no interest in play or anything else. They began to improve with the first dose of TANLAC and today there are no more healthy children in Detroit."

Tanlac for sale by all good druggists. Over 40 million bottles sold. Accept no substitute.

Take Tanlac "Stomach Pills" Adv.

**Corns**  
Don't risk blood poisoning by paring a corn. Apply Blue-jay, the scientific corn tender. The pain will vanish instantly. Then the corn loosens and comes out. Get Blue-jay today at your druggist.

**Blue-jay**  
© B & B 1124

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Twinkling Coquet styles seem almost to wink an invitation from among the many slippers at Bruck's.

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